



## **DSBN Guidelines for Use of School Board Resources during the Municipal and School Board Election Campaign**

### **Guideline Statement/Objective:**

To establish instructions for the use of school board resources by trustees during the Municipal and School Board Election campaign period. Nothing in this policy prevents current elected trustees from performing their role and duties during their term of office. Boards can also consider providing guidelines for activities involving trustees and candidates during the campaign.

### **Background Information:**

Trustees play an important role as they are the only publicly elected official with the direct responsibility for the education of our children. The District School Board of Niagara actively promotes and supports the role of the local democratically elected trustee.

Municipal and School Board Elections are held every four years and the *Municipal Elections Act* is reviewed after every election. Legislative changes following the last review were identified in both Bill 181, Municipal Elections Modernization Act and Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act. The *Municipal Elections Modernization Act* received Royal Assent on June 9, 2016. In accordance with that *Act*,

*“Before May 1 in the year of a regular election, municipalities and local boards shall establish rules and procedures with respect to the use of municipal or board resources, as the case may be, during the election campaign period.”*

### **Key Dates:**

The next Municipal and School Board Election will be held on Monday, October 22, 2018. Candidates will be able to register their nomination forms with clerks at their municipal office beginning Tuesday, May 1, 2018, until Friday, July 27, 2018, at 2 p.m.

The Campaign Period\* is from the day nominations are open (May 1) to Election Day (October 22).

The 2018-2022 Term of Office begins on December 1, 2018, and ends on November 14, 2022\*\*.

*\*The Campaign Period is technically until December 31, 2018, as that is the deadline for candidates to accept campaign contributions or incur campaign-related expenses.*

*\*\* As of 2022, the term of office will begin on November 15 of an election year.*

### **Definitions**

School Board resources may include: staff time, computer, fax, telephone, cellphone, laptop, tablet, website, newsletter, email, board or school social media accounts. This list is to include any board-issued resource and any other information technology devices given to a trustee for their work use as a trustee of the board.



### **Before the Campaign Begins – Prior to May 1, 2018:**

- Trustees are expected to continue using their board-issued resources in fulfilling their duties as a member of the Board.

### **During the Campaign – After May 1, 2018:**

- Trustees will not use their Board office or school board-issued resources for any campaign-related purposes. This includes displaying election-related materials in Board offices, board meetings, board events or school-related events.
- Trustees will not distribute or use the Board logo or Board telephone number or other contact information, including any Board branding in any campaign-related material.
- Trustees must ensure that all campaign-related material is funded by the trustee in their capacity as a candidate.
- Trustees will not use the Board's email system to distribute election-related electronic messages and will not use the board's voicemail system to record election-related messages.
- Trustee websites and newsletters that are funded by the Board, are not to include campaign-related material.
- Trustees will use their personal information technology resources to create and use social media accounts created for campaign purposes. These are to be separate and distinct from any accounts used by the candidate in their position as a trustee.
- Trustees will not distribute (print, electronic or other method) any election-related materials via students or parents/guardians.
- Trustees will not use the services of Board staff to assist or advise in the preparation, distribution or communication of any election-related material.

### **Other Activities during the Campaign Period:**

#### School Visits – by Trustees

- Trustees who are seeking re-election may continue to perform their duties which may include their continued participation in local events held in schools while they serve their term of office. Trustees should not participate in activities at school events that could be perceived as campaigning.



### School Visits – by Candidates

- Requests for visits by candidates, for the purposes of campaigning, are not considered appropriate. *All Candidates Meetings* are encouraged and may occur on school property. These are sometimes arranged by school councils and community groups and usually held at night during non-school hours. Consider a minimum of two confirmed candidates before proceeding with the meeting.

### School-Related Events

- Candidates are not permitted to campaign at school-related events intended for the students and parents/guardians of that school. Current trustees may continue to attend and participate in school-related activities but shall not campaign or conduct themselves in any way that may be perceived as campaigning.

### Campaign Involvement – Student

- Students are encouraged to participate in curriculum-based activities (Civics) and democratic awareness programs such as Student Vote. Secondary students may choose to earn their Community Involvement Hours by participating in a legitimate election campaign. It is strongly recommended that students not volunteer for a candidate seeking election for their local school board. Any campaign or election activities must be done outside of school hours and not on school property.

### Reference Documents:

- *Municipal Elections Act*
- *Education Act*
- Code of Conduct
- Other relevant Board policies/procedures